

HAMNET BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY 5 OCTOBER 2003

HAMNET is the Official Emergency Communications network of the South African Radio League and provides emergency communication to local, regional and national authorities, when requested to do so.

THIS BULLETIN WAS COMPILED AND PREPARED BY FRANCOIS BOTHA ZS6BUU.

IN THE BULLETIN TODAY:-

BULLETINS AROUND THE COUNTRY HAMNET WEATHER WATCH INTERNATIONAL POWER FAILURES LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL DISASTERS DATES TO REMEMBER STOP PRESS ITEM FINAL NOTE

(Please note, due to computer problems, not the usual informative bulletin my apologies),

1. HAMNET BULLETINS AROUND THE COUNTRY

KZN Sunday morning at 07H00 on their local VHF repeaters with a relay on 7.070MHz

National Bulletin at 17H00 local on 10,130Mhz in the 30M band with a relay on 7.070Mhz, but currently being read at 16H30 due to propagation problems in winter.

The Gauteng North bulletin will follow immediately after the National Bulletin on 145,725MHz in the Pretoria area on Sundays.

North West Province have a club bulletin on Mondays, which includes a Hamnet segment at 19H00 local on 3,750Mhz in the 80M band as well as their local repeater on 145.737.5Mhz.

Hamnet Western Cape Province with a bulletin on Wednesdays at 20H30 local on 145:700MHz, relayed on 3,674MHz.

The HAMNET Bulletin is sent to all those of whom I have an e-mail address and also sent out on packet by Rudi, ZS6DX.

2. HAMNET WEATHER WATCH

The re-introduction of the daily weather watch, suggested by Martin ZS6MSG, has turned out to be a winner.

The list is growing, not so much in numbers as it is not possible for all who have contributed over the last month or so, to be on frequency every day, but what is interesting is the coverage we are getting, even from listeners.

It is not just the amateurs who participate on a daily basis on air, but also phone calls, cell phone calls and E-mails we get from non-amateur listeners.

In particular, Andre Pretorius in Oranjemund. Andre is a listener and hopefully we will eventually hear his voice on air. But when time allows, we get E-mail reports from the furthest northwesterly point of our country, which is amazing.

We also have John Nutt, another keen Amateur Radio listener in Aloe Fjord who even went so far as to place his cell phone out the window one afternoon, so I could actually hear the rain coming down. Well-done John.

I am now wondering, are there any other listeners out there who would like to participate? Why not? My E-mail address is francois@overflow.co.za and my phone number is 011 679-5260 or cell number 083 585 3847. Lets hear from you and join our daily friendship weather watch net, with reports from around the country and sometimes even beyond.

My thanks to all the daily participants who are making this exercise such a wonderful and valuable success.

3. INTERNATIONAL POWER FAILURES

There appears to be a new phenomena occurring around the world of late. Major, and I mean major power failures which in one instance affect a whole country namely Italy.

Can you imagine the chaos to infrastructure this caused?

No telephone communication. No Cellular Phone communication. No Radio communication. No Satellite communication.

In short, no communication period.

You all recall the first one. Northeastern part of the USA. A major blackout or outage as they call it.

The next, a few weeks later, Denmark had a major disruption but the real cherry on the top was Italy. The whole country for 12-18 hours! Frightening!

We have become so accustomed to, used to and oblivious of the fact that if you flick a switch, power is there. But when it is not, what then.

Again this emphasizes the value of alternative power sources namely batteries or a generator. For those HAMNET operators who are accustomed to doing fieldwork, this is a common part of our equipment, however, those of us at home or at base, if you don't have it yet, consider alternative means of energy to run your equipment.

Who knows, it could happen here as well and we don't want to be caught short when the need arises to run our stations on alternative power sources.

4. LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL DISASTERS

Only one item could be downloaded before I ran into problems and that was the flood in Sri Lanka. It affected 10,000 people and 8 died when torrential rain hit the southern part of the country earlier this week.

You may recall, in May this year, more than 600 people were killed and more than half a million people were displaced when floods hit the southern provinces of Galle and Matara in Sri Lanka.

Another item was a list of Complex Emergencies around the world at present, which was downloaded from the relief web site. Twenty-five countries around the world at present are in the grips of major disaster situations and more on this will follow when I can look at some of the more serious situations.

5. DATES TO REMEMBER

Hamnet have again been approached to do the communications for this year's Westcon Cycle Race. The race will be run over 2 distances on Sunday the 2nd of November, from the Roodepoort Athletic Stadium.

I have already approached some operators to assist, and will appreciate it if at least 3-5 more operators, especially those with both HF and VHF abilities contact me. The reason why we need both HF and VHF is that some of the further points of the 105-kilometre stretch is beyond the reach of the West Rand Repeater.

Should you be able to assist, please contact me at the numbers mentioned earlier in the Bulletin.

STOP PRESS ITEM:

It was learnt from a fairly reliable source that the Arrive Alive campaign this year, again wants to make use of the Amateur Radio fraternity.

Will inform you later as things develop. There is a meeting coming up early in November.

FINAL NOTE

Congratulations to two HAMNET members who have been elected to serve on the committees of various clubs around the country.

Firstly to Charl Brittz, ZS4FS, who has been elected as Chairman of the Free State A.R.C.

Also to Chris Viljoen, ZS6BYQ, who was elected as Vice chairman of the Potchefstroom A.R.C.

This will not have been read out over the air, as I feel it is of no concern to the listeners.

Unfortunately, there has been some unpleasantness I have had to deal with up here concerning possible action against a perpetrator using bad and foul language on air.

This was supposed to have been a private Council matter, which one Councillor felt fit to divulge to the guilty party concerned. I now have to deal with the aftermath of this and possibly life being made difficult for me (despite the fact

that this is a Council matter and not a private matter) on air because I wish to keep our Amateur Bands clear of foul language.

What I am saying is simply this; I expect every member of HAMNET to keep his nose clean and not to fall into the trap of being pressured, intimidated or caught short by using inappropriate language on air, no matter what the circumstances are.

Amateur Radio is a hobby that should in no way be equated with foul language being heard over commercial radio, Television or seen in Cinema s. Our frequencies are being monitored by ICASA, which is an open secret. So, lets be proud of and maintain the high standard expected of us, not just as HAMNET members but also as Amateur Radio Operators.

Bulletin ends.